

Contest coins that make the most cents

By Roger Boye

The 1909-S VDB Lincoln cent might be a hot item on the rare-coin market in the next five months.

So could a standing Liberty quarter, the Columbian Exposition half dollar and uncirculated coin sets of 1964. At least, those are my best guesses.

Coin World is asking 45 of its readers to select a coin portfolio worth no more than \$1,000. The person whose hoard goes up the most in value by early December (or in this sour market, goes down the least) gets a \$1,000 "shopping spree" among Coin World advertisers.

I'm not eligible, but I'm vying from the sidelines, hoping to win bragging rights if my choices finish in the top 10. Here's an explanation of my picks:

1. A 1909-S VDB Lincoln cent in "MS-60" ("mint state-typical") condition. Retail value: \$440. (Coin includes initials of its designer, Victor David Brenner, on the "tails side.")

Many "mint state" Lincoln cents made before 1959 have climbed in value during the past year while the coin market in general has been mired in a slump. The 1909-S VDB ranks as one of the best-known numismatic collectibles of the 20th Century, thanks in part to its extremely low mintage.

Recent issues of Coin World have carried up to five "wanted to buy" ads for the rare penny, which suggests that the hobby pros can't keep enough in stock.

2. A 1919-D quarter in "about uncirculated" condition. Retail value: \$335. "Standing Liberty" quarters—made from 1916 to 1930—are one of the most beautiful coin types ever produced, and I'm guessing that a New York auction in June of a spectacular set of such items might heighten collector interest.

The U.S. Mint struck fewer than two million 1919-D quarters and many of those were all but destroyed in circulation.

3. A Columbian Exposition half dollar of 1892 in "MS-60" condition. Retail value: \$87.50. In 1892 and 1893, Uncle Sam produced the country's first commemorative coins—halves honoring the 1893 World's Columbian



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Exposition in Chicago.

During the past few months, several dealers apparently have been buying Columbian half dollars as the exposition's centennial approaches. Their action might help push up prices. The 1892 half should prove to be a better investment than the 1893, thanks to the 1892's lower mintage.

4. An uncirculated coin set of 1964. Retail price: \$9. Recommendation: Buy 10 at \$90. This selection is a "play" on the price of silver, which spurted more than 10 percent in early June.

Each 1964 set contains 10 coins and 1.3 ounces of silver, worth nearly \$6 when silver sells for \$4.50 an ounce. The set also has profit potential as a collectible, because just one million were produced, fewer than any other U.S. uncirculated coin set issued since 1964.

I'll let you know in December how I did. Meanwhile, as the saying goes, these selections aren't guaranteed by the management.



Krause Publications has released the 18th edition of the hobby Bible, "Standard Catalog of World Coins." The 1,968-page tome—about the size of the Chicago telephone book—evaluates every coin minted in the world since 1801, each in up to four condition categories. To order, send \$39.95 plus \$2.50 for shipping to Krause Publications, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54990. The book also is sold in coin stores.